

To my state lawmakers,

It amazes me that my elected public servants have nothing better to do in the midst of a pandemic than to seek more ways to infringe upon the constitutional rights of law abiding citizens.

With regards to Raised House Bill 6355, consider the following facts.

(1) If suicides have been prevented under our current extreme risk warrant law, then our current laws in place are working. If firearm suicide prevention is one of the intentions of this bill, then remove the unintended consequence of Public Act 13-3 that made firearm owners reluctant to seek mental health because of their concern of losing their firearms for six months if they're voluntarily admitted for treatment. By adding medical professionals to the list of people that can directly petition the court for a firearm seizure warrant without an investigation, will only make firearms owners even more reluctant to seek treatment.

(2) If cases of risk warrants have stopped mass shootings then our current law is meeting the needs of Connecticut residents.

(3) Police will be involved when serving a warrant. Police response will be even greater if not involved from the initiation of the complaint. This will lead to an even higher police response when serving a firearm seizure warrant when they had no prior encounter with the person.

This bill will further stigmatize mental health or cause a person to become even more wary of police when multiple police units, or teams of law enforcement show up at their residence or place of employment.

(4) Fraudulent claims do happen in Connecticut. No one is prosecuted for perjury.

(5) Under current law firearms may be returned if after twelve months passed and there were no further claims, actions, or hospitalizations of "imminent risk". That should be proof that there is no longer an "imminent risk". The burden of proof should not be placed on the subject of the warrant.

Consider what the unintended consequences of this bill could be.

(1) Former partners, family members, or roommates seeking revenge could use this. There should be a penalty and prosecution for maliciously false accusations.

(2) When it comes to seizing guns through a petition, the standards that a judge uses should be high, and require facts, and investigation that show "an imminent and extreme risk" like under current law.

(3) This bill sets a precedent for the use of harsh measures against individuals not because they are alleged to have committed any crime,

but because somebody believes or feels they might, someday, commit one.

(4) The court order authorized by this bill could be issued without any indication that the person poses an imminent threat to others.

(5) The court order would require the confiscation of firearms owned by the person and place the burden on him or her to prove by clear and convincing evidence that they should be returned.

(6) If a person's firearms are seized, those firearms, often family heirlooms should be able to be transferred to family members who can lawfully possess firearms. This is unacceptable.

Do not make citizens choose between their civil liberties or mental health. OPPOSE Raised House Bill 6355 An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders or Warrants.

Sincerely,

Jack Kavanaugh

Groton CT